

and you get the lead in the cellblock summer play:
dryden's all for love: or a world well lost ...

now i didn't grow up hungry and i've always had
a lever, but there've been lean times,
no car. no television set. no record player,
no beer money, no extra cash for philandering,

and i, who weigh two hundred thirty pounds,
was once down to a hundred seventy, no
money for doctors. for dentists, for books
or stamps or movies or parties or a lawyer.

always knew. though, it was temporary,
always had a lever up my sleeve, but what
if they wouldn't let me teach anymore, and i
don't make any money writing. and everyone

agrees i'm not much good at anything else (if joe buck
couldn't make it as a stud. that leaves me out)
and strange girls are afraid of my long hair and
big nose, and i get surly when i get depressed ...

on the way to westwood to the flick, bobbie says
"can we be rich someday," and i say, "sure,"
and she says. "can we go springtime in paris.
moonlight in vermont. autumn in new york ..."

and i say. "sure," but how will i make any money
when i can't sit still for anything i can't write
in a sitting. and i won't do anything specifically
for money anyway. the paper doesn't even pay for my reviews.

and money. i guess, does matter. she says it doesn't
but she's beautiful and should be seen by men
around the world (and so should my wife who is beautiful
and young and never gets out except to the laundry ...)

after the show. we go to santa monica
for fish and chips. but i'm caught short and have
to borrow a couple of bucks from her. we drive
the coast to malibu and think about a motel.

but that would truly be an extravagance.
the forty miles back we wonder whether i
can get her on the payroll as student assistant.
this morning. at home, i find the rent-check has bounced.

envoi

i'm almost thirty and my lawyer says it's a critical
age for poets and that i should see a shrink
but my head is straight since bobbie, i'll just
go easy on the booze, and stay away from parabolic

naturalistic novels. instead i'll re-read
gatsby, which will remind me that money
is shit and that those who love it are shitless.
and up my sleeve i'll keep the lever mind.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach, California

Hyde

Pity the poor doctor who died of lust.
He never dreamed it possible that he
would ever suffer for such pleasure.
The good in him melted like chocolate.
Now widowed, whores cry over Hyde.
Charcoal smolders like a dream of war
inside his cheap, city-bought coffin.

Well and good. Murder can still happen
in the drawing rooms of manors
where butlers peep through keyholes. It still
stands around, hands in its pockets,
waiting in the stink of back alleys.
Nothing died with Hyde. The Dr. Jekylls
still mourn the boiling in their groins.

The cities remain lit until dawn,
factories busy machining fear.
Dogs howl and creep into our hearts
and we dream of running the bitch down.
We laugh to watch the ancient movie
but Hyde is in a corner of our bed and
there sleeps all the heat of our engines.

On His Twenty-First Birthday

The years have seemed too long to be.
My father talks about time lengthening
as if it were a football game
and could be called for darkness.
He told me to enjoy things discreetly
before I'm old enough to be caught.

Soon enough, he says, soon enough
the stars will click their heels and bow
and bend me backward like a birch.
Broken down by several years
of struggling with my poems I see
(like a wise thief sees money sealed